

Bluejacket HARP becomes Abe's 'Go Navy' initiative

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To a lot of Sailors on board Abraham Lincoln, when the time comes to take leave, they do just that. But others decide there's a better way to still go home while continuing to show support for their country and their Navy.

They do this by participating in the Bluejacket Hometown Area Recruiting Program.

Bluejacket HARP was developed to boost the Navy's recruiting efforts by sending junior personnel back to their hometowns to talk with prospective recruits about their experiences in the Navy.

"Round-trip travel for selected Bluejacket HARP Sailors to their hometowns will be completely funded by Commander Naval Recruiting Command," said NC1(AW) Jason Wallen, command career counselor. "They'll also get \$10 per diem."

"These Sailors will work for local recruiters in their hometown areas for a minimum of two weeks," Wallen continued. "Sailors who prove successful may, as determined by the naval recruiting district and parent command CO, extend their time on HARP to a maximum of two additional weeks."

"I think it's a great deal," said PNSN Jennifer LaTour, customer service, Administration Department. "I'm going home for two weeks, using no leave, and the travel is paid for. I'll be going to local high schools and talking to people interested in joining the Navy, telling them all about the opportunities the Navy has to offer. These include CLEP exams, PACE courses, college assistance, travel, and so on."



Abraham Lincoln Photo Lab / Photo by PH3 Edward Holland

NCSC James Patterson, from Durant, Okla. introduces Bluejacket HARP Sailors to their future roles as recruiters back home.

This won't be the first time LaTour has gone back to her hometown of Peshtigo, Wis., to talk with prospective recruits. She's a veteran of the Navy's recruiters assistance programs.

"The last time I went home, I helped my recruiter with his Delayed Entry Program personnel," said LaTour. "I talked to them about the Navy, what it had been like up to that point of my enlistment, what boot camp is really like, and stuff like that."

"I also helped drive DEP members to the bus station who were on their way to MEPS and I sat in on DEP meetings," LaTour continued. "Otherwise I mainly helped my recruiter with admin and office duties."

"To qualify for Bluejacket HARP, you must be a highly motivated Sailor,

currently on sea duty, have a high school diploma, volunteer, have a place to stay in your hometown, and meet current physical readiness test standards," said Wallen.

"I ran a request chit," said LaTour. "Based on job performance and personal appearance, they say 'yes' or 'no'. After you're approved, you go through some indoctrination classes, which are to help inform you of possible duties, uniform requirements, etc."

"We have crew members of Abraham Lincoln heading out on HARP duty to 49 of the 50 states, plus Puerto Rico," said Wallen.

With this initiative, Abe is leading the way in this new millennium by sending out the very best of the Navy's newest shipmates to find tomorrow's Sailors.